India.
The Illustrated Official Special Exhibition Series of
The JOURNAL OF INDIAN ART.

THE JOURNAL OF INDIAN ART

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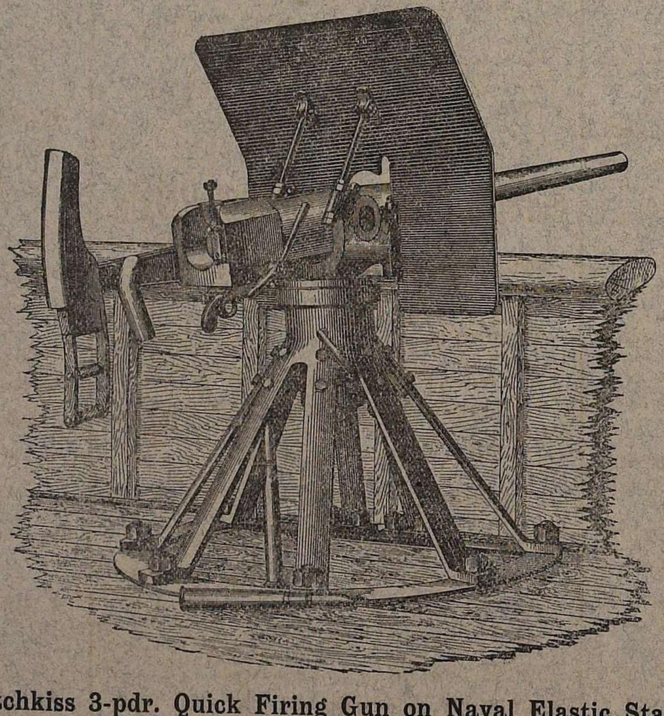

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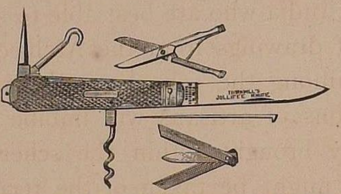

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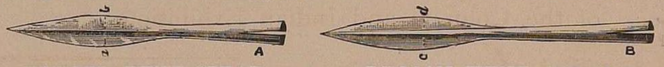

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INDIAN SECTION.

THE first of the Special Exhibition Series of this Journal cannot be better introduced than by the following prefatory remarks, in which Mr. Buck, the Commissioner for India, notices its connection with the Art Courts:—"It has been truly observed that there are two powerful causes at work in the direction of degrading Indian Art. The one is the gradual decline of wealthy patronage; the other is the introduction of a cheaper and less artistic class of goods from western countries. But the types of the old Art remain in the country, and there appears to be some hope that through the education of the new generation of native artists in the right direction, and by spreading through the country a better knowledge of Oriental patterns, Eastern Art may still struggle against the flood of Western ideas, which threatens to obliterate the characteristic features which form its charm." The object of the *Indian Art Journal* is educational. It was launched under the patronage of the Government of India two years ago. Receiving liberal contribution from those officials and residents of India who are best able to supply suitable illustrations, and comprising, as it will, a continuous series of drawings from the Archæological Survey of the Empire, it is hoped that it will, by distribution among the schools and workshops of the country, help to feed the source from which new generations of artisans will imbibe their ideas of art and construction. The *Art Journal* has been advisedly brought within the scheme of the Indian sections of the Exhibition in order that advantage might be taken of the recent labours of the officers in every Province and Native State of the Empire to commence what is intended to be a complete series of historical descriptions, illustrated by typical examples of the Art Manufactures of India. It will be continued after the close of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition.

THE PLAN OF THE INDIAN COURTS.

THIS plan is intended to enable the reader to form an idea of the relative position of the various divisions of the exhibits. Generally speaking we may divide the Indian portion of this Imperial Exhibition into five parts. The first three include the collections of exhibits provided by or through the agency of the Government of India, and which are distributed in three main divisions over the space allotted to the Government of India.

I. The Art Ware Courts, containing specimens of Art Ware and Ornamental Fabrics from each Indian Province or State.

II. The Economic Court, containing economic products and illustrations of agriculture and ethnology from the whole Empire of India.

III. The Administrative Courts, the contents of which illustrate the operations of the various great Administrative Departments. There are the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, the Department of Finance and Commerce, the Home, the Public Works, Legislative, Foreign, Military and Marine Departments.

The Central Court is devoted to the Art Ware Courts which are arranged geographically, and not as heretofore technically. After passing the vestibule and the Court, decorated for the reception of Her Majesty with a choice selection of chintzes from Kashmir and the Punjab, the great Jeypore Screen forms the entrance into the Rajputana Court. This is the first example which meets the visitor's eye of the splendid series of characteristic carved screens which enclose each Court. Mr. Buck in his explanatory preface says that notwithstanding the decay of some of the Arts which had wealthy and ostentatious patrons, the custom still prevails for opulent bankers and merchants to spend some part of their superfluous wealth in decorating the houses of their gods and their own dwellings with carvings in wood and stone. It was thought desirable therefore

that this living type of decorative Art should be given suitable prominence in the screens which form a double façade in front of the Provincial Courts. The idea of thus illustrating the decorative carving which ornaments so many of the streets and temples of India was originated on a small scale in one or two of the Courts of the Calcutta Exhibition of 1883, which were enclosed by carved balustrades on the level of the ground. But in order to avoid interference with the free passage of the public it was decided by the Royal Commissioners that in London the carved work must be raised on arches, and it is satisfactory to know that this plan has rendered possible the imitation with greater closeness of the architectural style prevailing in India, which confines the richest part of the carving to the arches of doorways and to verandah balustrades. The carved screens have been constructed from a grant specially made for the purpose by the Royal Commissioners, and they form a convenient framework to the Courts containing the exhibits of each Province and Native State.

The order in which the respective Courts are arranged cannot be said to owe its motive to anything but convenience, or it may be the effect or *tout ensemble*. The first Court, as already remarked, is Rajputana, containing contributions from Ajmir-Mairwara, and the Jeypore, the Bhartpur, Karauli and Dholpur, Ulwar, Kotah, Ajmir and Bikanir States. Each possesses a screen and fills a sub-court with its Art wares.

Next in succession comes the CENTRAL INDIAN COURT in which the States of Gwalior, Bhopal, Rewa, Rutlam, Orchha, Datia, Punna, and Chhatrapur are represented. On the other side of a dividing passage is the BOMBAY AND BARODA COURT, to which also the States of Bhavnagur, Junagad and Cutch contribute. Next in order is the BENGAL COURT with a Hindu and Mahommedan screen on either side, to which is annexed Nepal, the elaborately carved screen shewing faithful examples of the ancient Newar Art.

The NORTH-WEST PROVINCES AND OUDH COURT is next entered, with its row of marble pillars inlaid with precious stones, the work of which is similar to much of the Taj Mahal, and which were recently excavated.

The PUNJAB COURT, as will be seen from the plan, occupies an extensive space, and is separated by a passage from a block comprising the KASHMIR COURT, the CENTRAL PROVINCES and the ASSAM COURT with its ornamental screen composed almost entirely of bamboo and cane, combined with *sitil pati* mats and native silk cloths; this forms a marked contrast to the elaborate carving of all the preceding screens. Then follow BURMAH AND MADRAS, the screens of which both carved in Burmese teak stand out in marked contrast, the composite Buddhistic and autochthonous religious motives of the former seeming to be far remote from the Dravidian architecture of the Vijaynagar period. The last Court is divided between HYDERABAD on one side and MYSORE and COORG on the other, the latter occupying two out of the seven bays.

The IMPERIAL COURT devoted to the economic products occupies the South Court, which is entered by the great gateway composed of Indian timbers, most of the specimens belonging to the Bengal Economic Museum. The arrangement of this Court differs altogether from that of the Art Ware Courts. It groups together, under the scientific arrangement which is followed in the classified list prepared by Dr. Watt, the products of the Indian Empire. It may not be generally known that for the first time a complete economic survey of the Empire has been attempted. It is impossible, and were it not so, it would be somewhat outside the scope of this journal to give even a bird's eye view of the successive products which can be studied by the aid of the index collection arranged on the northern wall of the Court. But we may note the Indian shops arranged on the left, the models of native villages illustrating the everyday life of the people, and the figures which show the exact types not only of the superior races but also of the wild tribes who represent the ancient peoples whose land the Aryan invaders conquered and possessed, but who still inhabit the hills and forests under various names.

These ethnological exhibits have, however, to quote Mr. Buck again, a twofold object which connects them directly with the object of this journal, and which will entitle them to a fuller notice when occasion may serve. In the first place they serve to give to the people of England some practical idea of the variety of races which are found in different parts of the great continent of India, as well as of the various manners in which ornamental fabrics are utilised as articles of dress; in the second place, to encourage an Art which seems capable of attaining considerable excellence in India—that of clay modelling. The clay modellers in more than one Province of the Empire are in some respects equal to the best terra-cotta workers in Italy, and the system for the first time adopted in connection with this exhibition of re-producing their work in Plaster of Paris seems likely to give prominence and encouragement to the Plastic Art of the country, since it will now be possible to meet any demand which may arise for such work with less risk of breakage and at a much smaller cost.

In the centre of the Economic Court the great bamboo bridge, or as it may be call trophy, is a conspicuous object, and the collection of over three thousand articles made from this most versatile material, can only be briefly introduced by a quotation from Colonel Yule's "Anglo-Indian Glossary," p. 41. "In fact it might almost be said that among the Indo-Chinese nations the staff of life is a bamboo. Scaffolding and ladders, landing-jetties, fishing apparatus, irrigation wheels and scoops, oars, masts and yards, spears and arrows, hats and helmets, bow, bow-string and quiver, oil cans, water-stoups and cooking pots, pipe-sticks, conduits, clothes-boxes, pan-boxes, dinner-trays, pickles, preserves, and melodious musical instruments, torches, footballs, cordage, bellows, mats, paper, these are but a few of the articles that are made from the bamboo. To these may be added from a cursory inspection of a collection in one of the museums at Kew, combs, mugs, sun-blinds, cages, grotesque carvings, brushes, fans, shirts, sails, teapots, pipes and harps." A conspicuous feature—though outside the Economic Court, and not included in the Imperial collection, as being a special presentation from the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce—will be the Burmese Pavilion. This, while forming an excellent illustration of the native Pagoda architecture, will also comprise an interesting exhibit of the great staples of the country, timber and rice.

We must not omit the display of native agricultural implements on a reduced scale, which will be found on the south side of the Imperial or Economic Court, and which will prove of great interest.

The third section containing the Administrative Courts will be found in the Arcade starting from the right of the Military Court. The series of records and reports which have been provided will enable any persons who desire to make themselves acquainted with the details of the internal administration of India, to ascertain the sources from which the best and most complete information is obtainable. The presence, too, of the Administrative Courts in the Exhibition building will help to give some practical notion of the vast machinery required for the administration of the Indian Empire, and in this view, the contents of these Courts hold a significant position among the exhibits provided by the Government of India.

Another most attractive display is that of the *ferae naturae* which will be found in the Kuch Behar Hunting Trophy at the head of the North Court. This has been furnished by the generous assistance of H. H. the Maharaja of Kuch Behar, a well-known and popular Prince and sportsman.

We now come to the fourth division of the Exhibition. In the North Court 200 feet of space are devoted to the representation of the teas, coffees and cocoas from India arranged in small Courts. The different qualities will be shown in glass cases, and visitors will be enabled also to test the result of the various infusions. The Colonial and Indian tea rooms are shewn on the other side of the northern wall, and will be for refreshment rather than tasting. The Indian tobacco growers and manufacturers will display their samples in this room. The arrangement of these products has been carried out by Messrs. H. S. King & Co. The Court devoted to private exhibitors occupies the western section of the North Court and is exclusively occupied by Indian firms or by native exhibitors who are represented by H. S. King & Co. as agents under special appointment. The display of Art Ware of all descriptions brought together by Messrs. Proctor & Co., Mawe, Lockwood de Forest, and others will make this Court a most attractive and interesting one.

Last in the five main divisions comes the Indian Palace and Royal Pavilion with its Durbar Hall erected under the personal supervision of Mr. Purdon Clarke, and immediately fronting the Bishop's Gate of Old London. The entrance will be through the magnificent Gwalior gateway presented by H. H. Maharaja Scindia, flanked by bastions, which admirably simulate the embattled approach to an ancient palace, into a fore Court, where the palace artisans brought over under the charge of Dr. Tyler will be seen at work. The following is a complete list of the artisans: carpet weaving, wood carving and turning, gold and silversmith's work, Delhi embossed copper work, brass founding, seal engraving, sweetmeat making, earthenware and glazed ware, stone carving, cotton printing and dyeing, silk weaving, Kinkhab weaving, clay figure making from Lucknow, and miniature painting. A full description of the Palace, the Pavilion, and Durbar Hall will be given with illustrations in an early number.

BOMBAY EXHIBITS.

BOMBAY contributes a large collection of specimens of Art Ware from that Presidency, including contributions from Baroda, Cutch, Bhavnagar, Navanagar, Gondal, Morvi, Cambay, Junagad, Palanpur, Revakantha, and Savantradi States, as well as from Aden in Arabia, which also is under its Administration.

The most attractive feature of the Bombay Court is the carved ornamental Screen that runs along its entire length. The Royal Commissioners have taken plaster casts from the panels and pillars of this Screen for decorating nearly the whole of the "Private Exhibitors' Court," and it must be a matter of gratification, to those concerned, to see the beautiful and remarkably effective Bombay carving repeated everywhere in decorating a series of Courts extending along the entire length of the large building. Any more proof of the design and workmanship of this Screen would be superfluous. The Baroda Pigeon-house, a lofty structure most elaborately carved, attracts attention, and is deserving of the central position assigned to it. In Baroda and over Gujarat the Jain and Hindu inhabitants erect "pigeon-houses" for feeding, not only pigeons, but parrots, sparrows, and all other birds living in or near their towns. The Gujarathis consider it a sin to kill any animal, and to feed them is held to be a great act of charity. All the pigeon-houses are therefore erected by the wealthy natives of Gujarat out of sheer charity. In the mornings it is a pleasant sight to watch men, women, girls, and boys, all carrying grains to be spread about these pigeon-houses, and to witness the boldness with which the birds and squirrels partake their breakfasts in spite of the presence of a humane crowd, one inhuman member of which is sufficient to frighten them all in their wild or "undomesticated" state. H. H. the Gaekwar of Baroda, who contributes this monument of the humanity of his subjects, deserves credit, not only as its appreciator, but as a patron of the Art of wood carving, of which Gujarat is the birth-place and the cradle in Western India.

Several other specimens of wood carving have been sent from Gujarat, and Mr. Mulchandabhai Hattising, of Ahmedabad, deserves a special mention. Mr. Wimbridge, of Bombay, who has employed a large number of the Gujarat carvers, and who, as the Managing Proprietor of the East India Art Manufacturing Company, undertook to construct a large portion of the Bombay Screen, has also sent some good pieces of furniture and an extra piece of the Screen, which can be utilized as an ornament for the fireside of an English mansion. It may be remarked that the few specimens of furniture supplied by the East India Art Manufacturing Company, and by Mr. Mulchandabhai, of Ahmedabad, materially differ from the clumsy and ill-proportioned work found all over London as "Bombay Blackwood furniture," of which the Bombay Committee have carefully avoided sending any specimens for the Exhibition.

PAINTINGS.

Painting is an ancient Art in India, in "Sakuntala," or the "Lost Ring," in "Vikramorvasi," and in the "Uttar Ramcharitra," this Art is mentioned; and in the ancient caves of Ajanta and Bag it still gives a proof of what the Hindus could do with their primitive brushes and natural pigments. The India Museum contains a large number of copies of the Ajanta Paintings, and some of the decorations are introduced on pieces of Pottery contributed from Bombay. In times gone by the Indian Princes patronized this Art by employing artisans in their palaces, and vestige of that system may be seen in the Cutch Palace of this day, which sends a long roll depicting the holiday procession of His Highness the Rao. The elephants, camels, horses, palanquins, howdas, state carriages, tom-toms, banners, arms, and armour of an Oriental Prince can all be seen painted in this scroll. The indigenous Art of Painting in its various applications and stages can also be seen in the lacquered furniture of Savantwadi, the toys of Sind, Surat, Gondal, and Gokak, the glazed tiles from Hyderabad, and the misnamed "Bombay Pottery," which is painted and glazed in that city under the supervision of a Sind potter from Halla. Of European Art of Painting, as practised in India, there is a series of Paintings from Mr. Van Ruith, who specially illustrate scenes from the domestic life of the natives, a few portraits and illustrations of the "Bombay Flora," by students of the Bombay School of Art and Mr. Lovett's sketches of the native army as equipped and dressed by the British Government.

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Photography is not an Indian Art, and yet the Photographs sent by the Bombay Committee are very useful in truthfully illustrating the manner and habits of the artisans of that place, as well as the house decoration as practised in Western India. It bespeaks good judgment to select several of the artisans at work for being photographed, as visitors to the Exhibition would naturally like to know something about men, the result of whose patient labour and skilful workmanship is placed before them in such a pleasing manner.

STONE-WORK.

His Highness the Thakur Saheb of Bhavnagar has contributed a large marble screen, elaborately designed and exquisitely carved. It is said that this piece forms a part of the Cenotaph, or sculptured marble *chhatri*, designed by Mr. Griffiths, Superintendent of the Bombay School of Art, and being erected in memory of the late wife of the present Ruler, under the direct superintendence of

Mr. R. Proctor Sims, C.E., the State Engineer of Bhavnagar. A carved window in soap-stone, from Rewa Kantha, and a few specimens of carved marble from Cutch, have also been exhibited, along with some carved plates from Dhrangadhra in Kathiawar. We may mention here the plaster busts of the ministers and British officers of Bhavnagar, executed by Mistri Vala Hira, a former student of the Bombay School of Art, employed as a Head Artisan of that State.

POONA CLAY FIGURES.

Poona Clay Figures are distinguished for their truthful modelling and life-like representation of the large variety of races inhabiting the Bombay Presidency, each race having its dress and turban distinct from another. They differ from Lucknow figures, in which the dresses are modelled and painted, their dresses being made up of actual pieces of cloth. It is a modern industry, developing itself from the indigenous toymaking trade, owing to the demand created by the European collectors of curios, who are struck with the infinite variety of the head dress of the people, and bring the models home to England to show to their friends and relations the life-like representations of those among whom they moved in a distant land. The typical set of these figures now exhibited is possibly the best of its kind.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

Bhavnagar, Baroda, and Cutch send a complete collection of the Musical Instruments of India, consisting of *Satars*, *Bins*, *Tamboris*, *Sundaris*, *Sarangis*, *Vinas*, *tun tunas*, a large variety of drums, and a good collection of cymbals and bells. The Conch, or *Shankh* shell, *Turbenella rapa* used in the Mahabharata as a war bugle, has also found its place in the group.

INLAID WORK (WOOD).

The Bombay and Surat Inlaid Work-boxes, made of sandalwood and decorated with ivory, blackwood, or metal, are imported in large quantities, and are too well known to need any special description. This industry owes its origin to the Parsi artisans of Surat. When Bombay became the commercial capital of Western India some of the Parsi workbox makers migrated and settled themselves in that island under the protection and patronage of the British Government. The Bombay Committee has acted very wisely in sending only a few of the best specimens of this work, as they are easily spoilt by exposure to damp, which peels off the ivory and renders them liable to be deteriorated. We have besides, in London, a large number of them exposed for sale, and unless some of the best samples of workmanship were exhibited, it would have been difficult to please the English public. The Ratnagiri School of Industry supplies a large Cabinet inlaid with ivory and stag-horn, but beyond its marking the progress of an educational institution it has hardly any interest.

GLASS WARE.

Kapadnanj, in the Kaira district, is the only place in the Bombay Presidency where Glass is manufactured in its primitive state from a natural earth called *us*, which is a mixture of the carbonates and silicates of soda with several mineral impurities. It is, however, remarkable for its iridescent properties and good colour, resembling the antique and old Venetian. The shapes are quaint and beautiful. In that little town there are about 40 to 50 families engaged in this industry, and bangles for native women are sent to Sidhapur, Disa, Palanpur, Kadi, Broach, and Bombay. It is a curious fact that all the glass-makers of Kapadnanj are Musulmans, and that the Hindus of that town deem it against their religion to follow that profession. The Musjid derives a profit of 2 per cent. on the sale proceeds of the glass, and if a workman breaks his promise of supplying a given quantity of the glass at the rate he agreed to give it, he is punished by his caste-men with excommunication. A fine, ranging from 10 rupees to 20 rupees, and proper fulfilment of the broken promise, alone entitles him to re-admission into the community. All accounts between the workmen and the dealers are settled on Fridays. If a workman cannot settle his account on that day he is to pay a heavy interest. It is said that crude glass, of the value of about 3 *lakhs* of rupees, is annually sent to Bombay for foreign export by some Bhoras and Banias, and that it is purified and turned into various shapes in the glass manufactories of the European Continent. It would be interesting to find out some more definite statistical account of this trade, which, though represented by a few pots and bottles, may, if well regulated, develope itself into an important item of the manufactures of Bombay.

CAMBAY STONES.

His Highness the Nawab of Cambay exhibits a large collection of paper cutters, jewellery boxes, armlets, buttons, rings, and necklaces made of agates, moss-stones, cornelians, and blood-stones. There are about 100 merchants who deal in these stones, which are collectively known as Cambay Stones, and the number of artisans is said to be about 2,500 to 3,000. The stone is obtained from

Ratanpur Hill, in Nandor sub-division of the Morvi State, in Kathiawar, and from Kapadnanj in Kaira, 3 annas to 5 annas a *sher* of 80 *tolas*, according to the size and quality. One *maund* gives three to five *shers* of the dressed stone. The monthly income of an artisan ranges from 7 rupees to 60 rupees a month, according to his workmanship, and the trade is supported by exports to China, Jeddo, and Bombay. The Cambay State imposes 10 per cent. export duty on the articles, and it is said that the annual outturn ranges from 2 to 3 *lakhs* of rupees.

THE CARVED TEAK WOOD SCREEN OF THE BOMBAY COURT.

AMONG the principal features of interest in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition are the ornamental screens which divide the several Provincial Courts of the Indian Section of the Exhibition. The Screen for the Bombay Court—the general design for which was made by Mr. Griffiths, the Superintendent of the Bombay School of Art, and Secretary to the Bombay Committee for the London Exhibition, and which forms the subject of illustration in the present number of the Journal, consists of two lengths, each of 80 feet long, made up of eight open bays, 10 feet wide. In addition to these, are the four ends, each 12 feet wide—the total length of the screen being 208 feet with a uniform height of 10 feet. The two centre bays on either side are corbelled out so as to break up the monotony of the long flat façade. The design of the screen has been made with a view to illustrate as fully as possible the characteristic wood-carving of the Presidency.

The cost of the screen is met by a grant from the Royal Commission and contributions from Native States. The amount assigned by the Royal Commission to Bombay, including Baroda, was Rupees 4,500, which sum would not go far in illustrating the elaborate carving, characteristic of the wood work of the Presidency. The Bombay Committee therefore, applied to some of the native princes for subscriptions and they most liberally responded to the Committee's request. His Highness the Gaikwar of Baroda, and His Highness the Thakur Saheb of Bhavnagar, each contributed Rupees 4,000; His Highness the Rao of Cutch, Rupees 2,000, and His Highness the Nawab of Junagad undertook to fill in two bays at a cost of Rupees 1,700. The present intention is to sell the screen after the closing of the Exhibition, so that the contributors will be reimbursed to the amount of their contributions.

The sections of the screen belonging to the Royal Commission, His Highness the Gaikwar of Baroda, and His Highness the Rao of Cutch, being fourteen bays out of twenty-four, were executed by native artizans, under the able superintendence of Mr. Wimbridge of the East India Art Manufacturing Company. Mr. Wimbridge who prepared all the working details has taken the examples of the carved ornament for the Royal Commission, and Cutch Sections from the following well-known mosques, at Ahmedabad, viz: Mahafiz Khan, Shapur, Dastur Khan, and Rani Sipri—and the details for the Baroda Section are from various houses in Surat.

The Bhavnagar Section which comprises four of the richest bays, was constructed in Bhavnagar itself, under the immediate supervision of Mr. Proctor Sims, the State Engineer, assisted by a very intelligent native mistry, Harilal Parshotana. The details of the work are taken from the old palace, and from some of the houses in the town.

The Junagad section, which may be cited as a specimen of work executed without intelligent supervision, was likewise carried out locally by Dalpat Nathu.

HAMMERED COPPER.

THIS is a new branch of art taught in the Bombay School of Art, which is so ably and successfully directed by Mr. J. Griffiths. The panel or plaque, the design of which is taken from the Ajanta Caves, and the vase figured in the illustration show great excellence both in design and execution. The theme of the plaque is well treated albeit quite alien in its religious origin to the modes of thought of the present artists.

KINKHAB.

KINKHAB, of which there are several good specimens in the Bombay Court, is a gold and silver brocade, manufactured at Ahmedabad and Surat, in the Bombay Presidency. There are about seventy to seventy-five dealers in Ahmedabad, and nearly the same number at Surat. At Ahmedabad, kinkhab with the woof either of gold or silver only is woven, while at Surat, the variety with gold and silver thread, as well as that with silk alone, is manufactured. At Ahmedabad there are about 500 to 600 looms for weaving kinkhab, and at Surat about 900 to 1000. The material is used for covering state carriages, saddle cloths, thrones, cushions, chairs and couches, and marriage dresses of bride-

grooms, bodices worn by women of Gujarat; and Musalmans' jackets and caps, are also made of it. The two specimens illustrated are called *"rumals"* and are used for covering presents given by princes and nobles. The designs for these are of great variety and beauty. Each design has its specific name by which it is known. The design *"gota vela"* literally thick lines *(gota)* running like a creeper *(vela)*, from the thick winding lines which form the prominent feature of the design; and *"pán Kothama Chardani,"* meaning four petalled flowers in diamonds formed of leaflets. This specimen is a variety of kinkhab, known as "Banaasi," from its resemblance to some of the fabrics manufactured at Benares. It is much thinner in texture than the ordinary kinkhab, and the fabric is used for scarves by both men and women.

PERFORATED BRASS WORK.

TWO windows represent the revival of the ancient perforated brass work of Ahmedabad, of which one is given in illustration. The designs are taken from the windows in the Rani Sipri and Shah Allam mosques, at Ahmedabad, whence also the details of the Cutch section of the screen were selected. Mr. Hope states that Rani Sipri was the wife of a son of Ahmed Shah, and her mosque and tomb were completed in 1431, probably by herself. They are the first of a series of buildings more elaborately ornate than any that preceded. Shah Allam who was the spiritual guide of Mahmud Begada, died in 1495.

CARVED FURNITURE.

THE reproach deservedly cast upon the cumbrous and tasteless Blackwood furniture with its depraved Dutch patterns and its inappropriateness, is in no way deserved by the examples given. They represent a tried departure in both design and execution in the carving of the *Shisham* wood, mainly due to the enterprise of M. Lockwood de Forest.

EASTERN ART CARPETS.

A VERY interesting Paper was read before the Society of Arts, on the 17th of March, on the above subject, the chair was taken by Sir G. Birdwood. Mr. Vincent J. Robinson, who has done more than anyone else, as a collector, exhibitor, and author, to diffuse a knowledge of the very best Oriental Carpets in England and on the Continent, dealt with the subject historically and critically.

After tracing the various early historical references to ornamental woollen work, he pointed out that the slender materials for Indian history do not enable us to discover when Carpets came to form one of the luxuries of Indian Chiefs. There is no trace of their use in the period of the Mahabharata, or in that of Asoka, or in the sixth century A.D., as exemplified in the rock-cut temples of Ajanta.

The Mahommedan conquest might be taken as the epoch when India, in her North-Western Central Provinces, underwent profound modifications, by which, however, the Provinces south of the Nerbudda were much less affected; and in the Southern part of India we have the Hindoo designs in their integrity, bold and vigorous in colour and geometric in form. Referring to the dyes originally used in the manufacture of Indian Carpets, the lecturer suggested that the acknowledged superiority of Oriental Carpets should be traced to the geographical and climatic conditions, both in regard to the production of the woollen material and to the agency of the sun in the process of dyeing. Another element of the success of the Oriental weavers, especially in design, was found in their abhorrence of novelty, and the lecturer went so far as to declare his wish to make it an axiom that in fine designs novelty must be excluded. This, in his opinion, would be strictly in accord with the true Oriental practice. As an illustration, there was quoted the pattern known as "Heratee," which has had the widest reception in modern times for Carpets. There is now no tracing the origin of this charming design, from which thousands of Carpets have been made with no two alike. The theme remains, but the colouring and even the scale of the drawing is ever changing with marvellous ingenuity. Another remarkably beautiful pattern of Indian origin seemed to have been suggested by orchid growth, the blossom of the dendrobium being a very conspicuous and beautiful feature.

With regard to the existing exemplars of choice Oriental Carpets, the remarkable circumstance was mentioned that, except that of the Sultan of Turkey, there is probably no Royal or even public collection which possesses really good specimens of choice Oriental Carpets, or such as would compare with examples in the hands of private collectors. Nor is there a reserve of fine Carpets anywhere existing to be drawn upon. The last places to look for such are now probably those which originally produced them.

The lecturer proceeded to attack the Indian Carpets collected at the South Kensington Museum, which were afterwards ably defended by Mr. C. Purdon Clarke, and from thence went on to denounce the establishment by the Government of India of the gaol Carpet industry, and attributed to the supply of Carpets therein manufactured, not only the overthrow of the native handicraft, but the loss of reputation of Indian Carpets as Art fabrics, which has already set in among artists and leaders of taste.

At the close of the discussion Sir George Birdwood said that it was perfectly awful to note the degeneration which had taken place in the artistic qualities of Indian Carpets in recent years. At one time he, himself, attributed this degeneration almost exclusively to the influence of the Government Schools of Art and the gaols. At present he felt that it was chiefly due to the influence of English Commerce on the historical handicrafts of India, and that the Schools of Art were really doing all they could to stem the tide of deterioration. At least this was true of the School of Art at Bombay, under Mr. Griffiths, and at Lahore, under Mr. Kipling, and at Madras, under Mr. Havell. It was now almost impossible to find any of the textile fabrics in Western India, which were not tainted with the aniline dyes. This had gone so far that even the most sacred articles used in the worship of the gods were contaminated with them. There was a sort of glove worn when telling the beads on a rosary before the gods, and all the examples of it sent to the forthcoming Exhibition from the Bombay Presidency were ruined artistically by the thread used in embroidering them being covered with aniline dyes. It was a most remarkable fact, for the use of the dyes in these articles amounted to a ceremonial pollution of them. Nearly all the textile fabrics sent from Bombay were smitten with the same prismatic leprosy, he could call it nothing else.

THE ARCHÆOLOGY OF INDIA.

THIS formed the subject of an interesting Paper read before the Indian section of the Society of Arts, on April 2nd, by James Gibbs, Esq., C.S.I., C.I.E., whose services to the department of Government Archæology, while a member of the Council of Bombay and of the Governor-General's Council, are well known. In reviewing the labours of those who have been prominent in the study of Indian Archæology, Mr. Gibbs mentioned that in the wreck of the P. and O. steamer *Indus*, General Cunningham, the founder and able conductor of the Archæological Survey of India, had lost the notes of years, and the books and some of the curiosities he had collected. This was well described as, to some extent, a national misfortune, which will prevent our benefitting by much of the labours of a lifetime spent in archæological pursuits. After describing the steps taken to secure the carrying out of a complete Archæological Survey in India, Mr. Gibbs spoke of the little support or encouragement that Archæology meets with from the great majority of the officers of the Government, and he expressed an earnest hope that a change might be brought about, as the knowledge of the feelings of those interested in Indian Archæology at home became more known to the otherwise able and energetic administrators in India. The subject of restoration was dealt with, and occasion was taken to make a suggestion which can be best given in the lecturer's own words. "When the fort of Delhi was taken, in 1857, great havoc was made in the Palace buildings, and the screen behind the Emperor's seat, in the Dewani Am or hall of public audience, was sadly mutilated and despoiled of some of the larger Mosaic tablets. A gallant officer, in high command, appropriated several, and having had them converted, I believe, into tables, sold them to the South Kensington Museum. One of them was the famous picture of Orpheus charming the animals, which is said to contain the portrait of the architect employed by Shah Jehan, Austin-de-Bordeaux. I trust that, as the screen is now being restored, those tablets may be returned and replaced in their original position." It did not seem to occur to any of the speakers that such a precedent would entail the restoration of all the antiquities collected in England, commencing with the Elgin Marbles.

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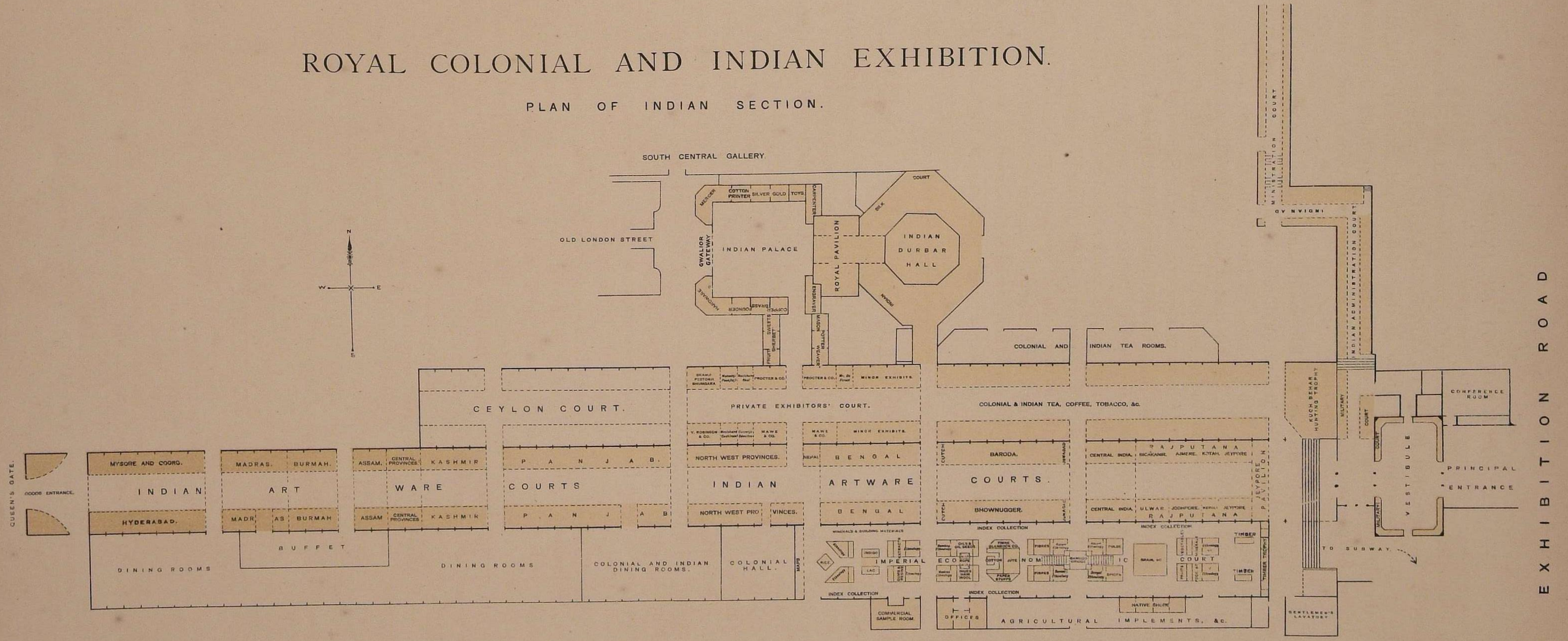
PICTURE FRAME AND CARVED CABINET. AHMEDABAD.

ROYAL COLONIAL AND INDIAN EXHIBITION.

PLAN OF INDIAN SECTION.

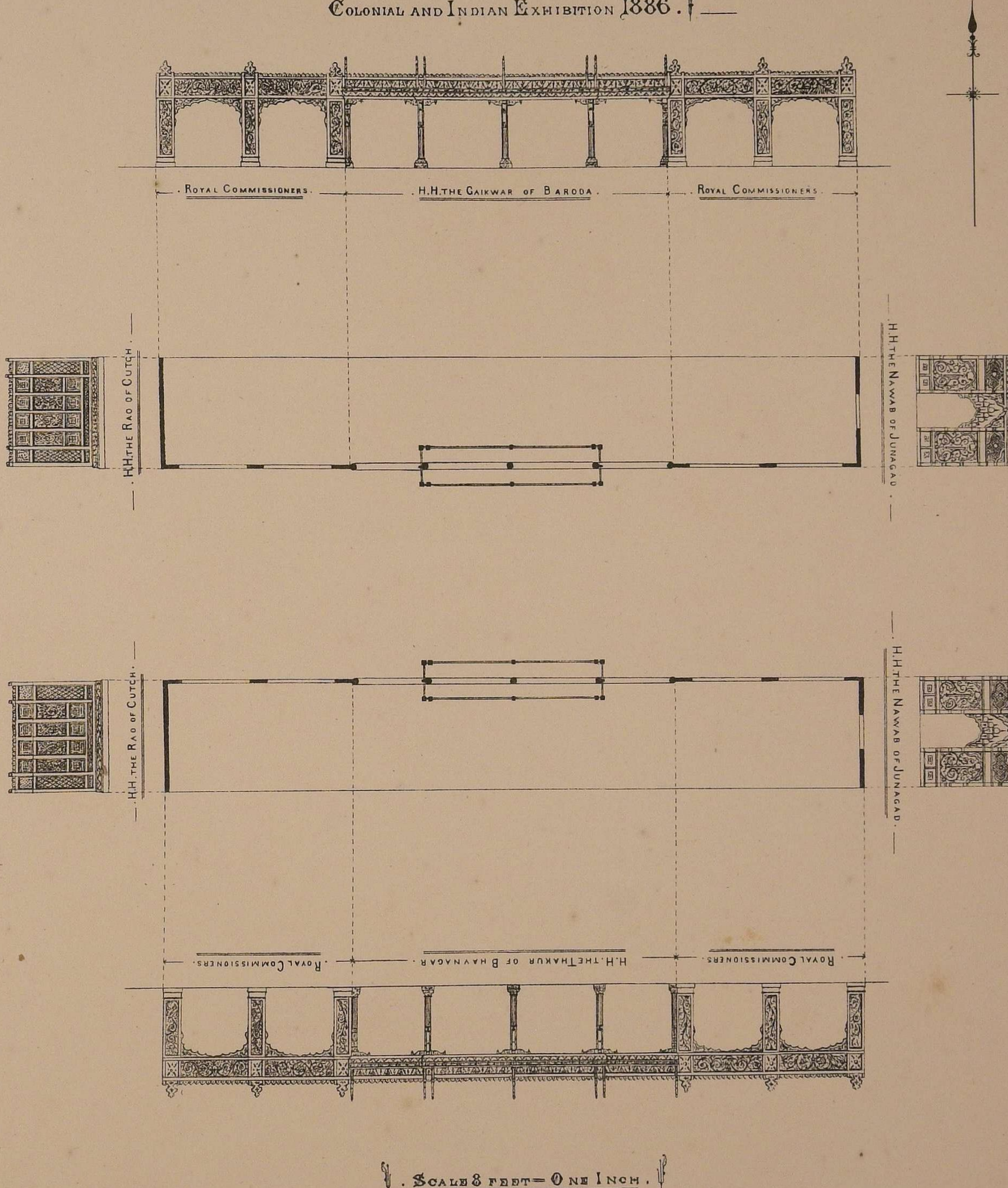


SCALE 72 FEET – 1 INCH

B. J. R. del.

W. Griggs, Photo-Lith Peckham S.E.

Drawing giving the names of the Contributors to, and showing the arrangement of the Carved Screen for the Bombay Court of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886.



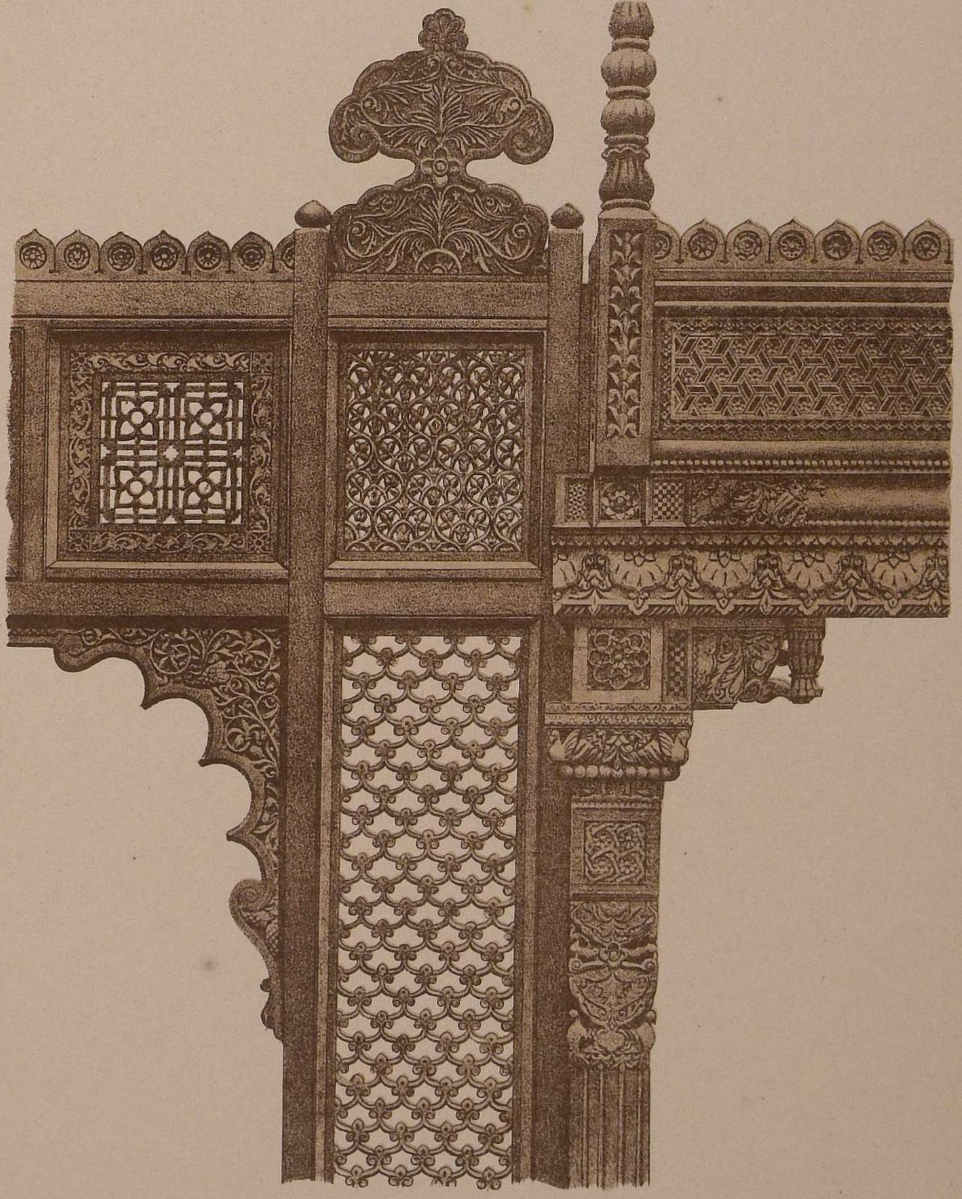
Scale 8 feet = One Inch.

School of Art, Bombay.

W. Griggs, Photo-lith.

WEST END.

CONTRIBUTED BY H.H. THE RAO OF CUTCH.



NORTH SIDE.

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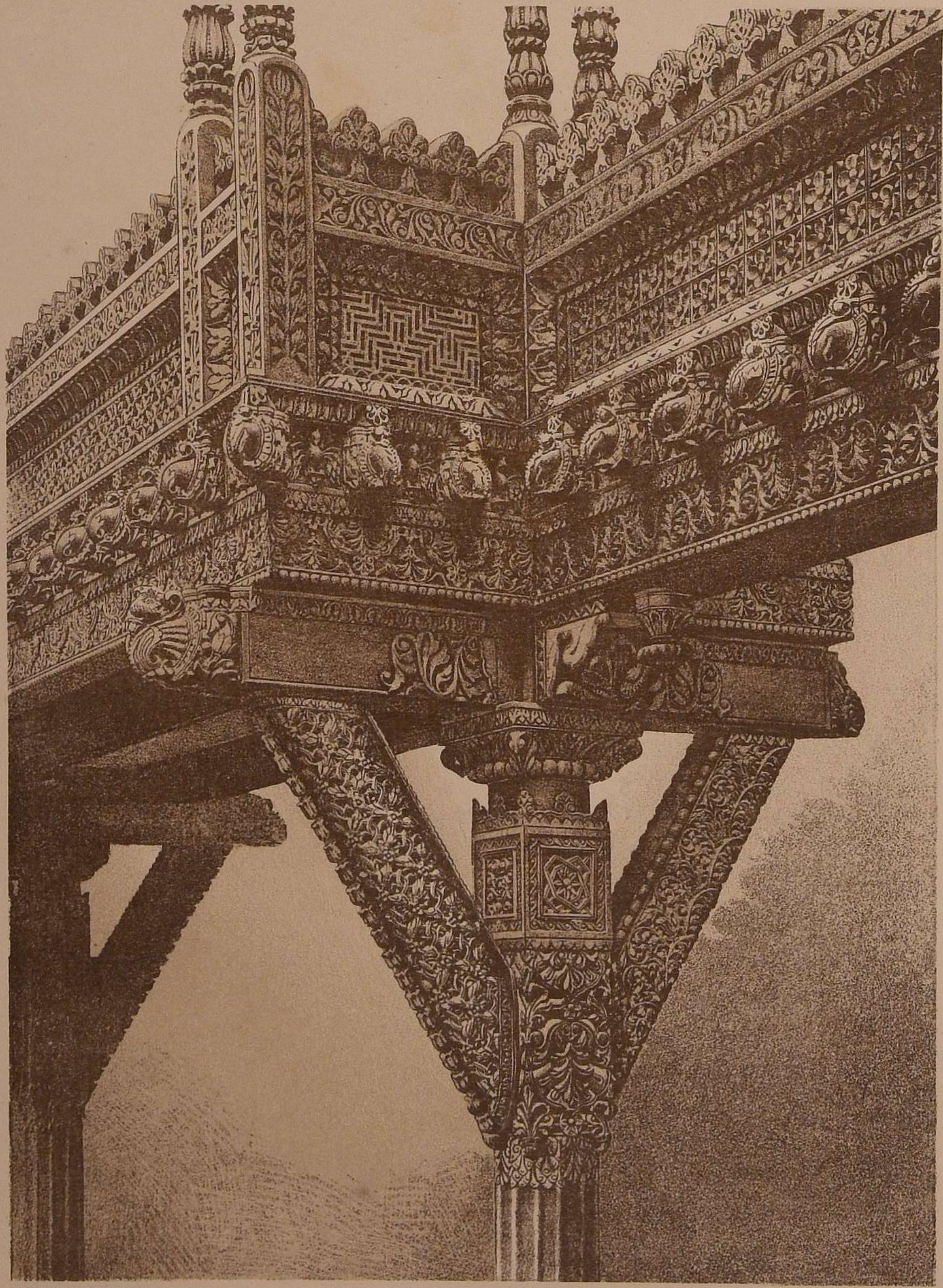

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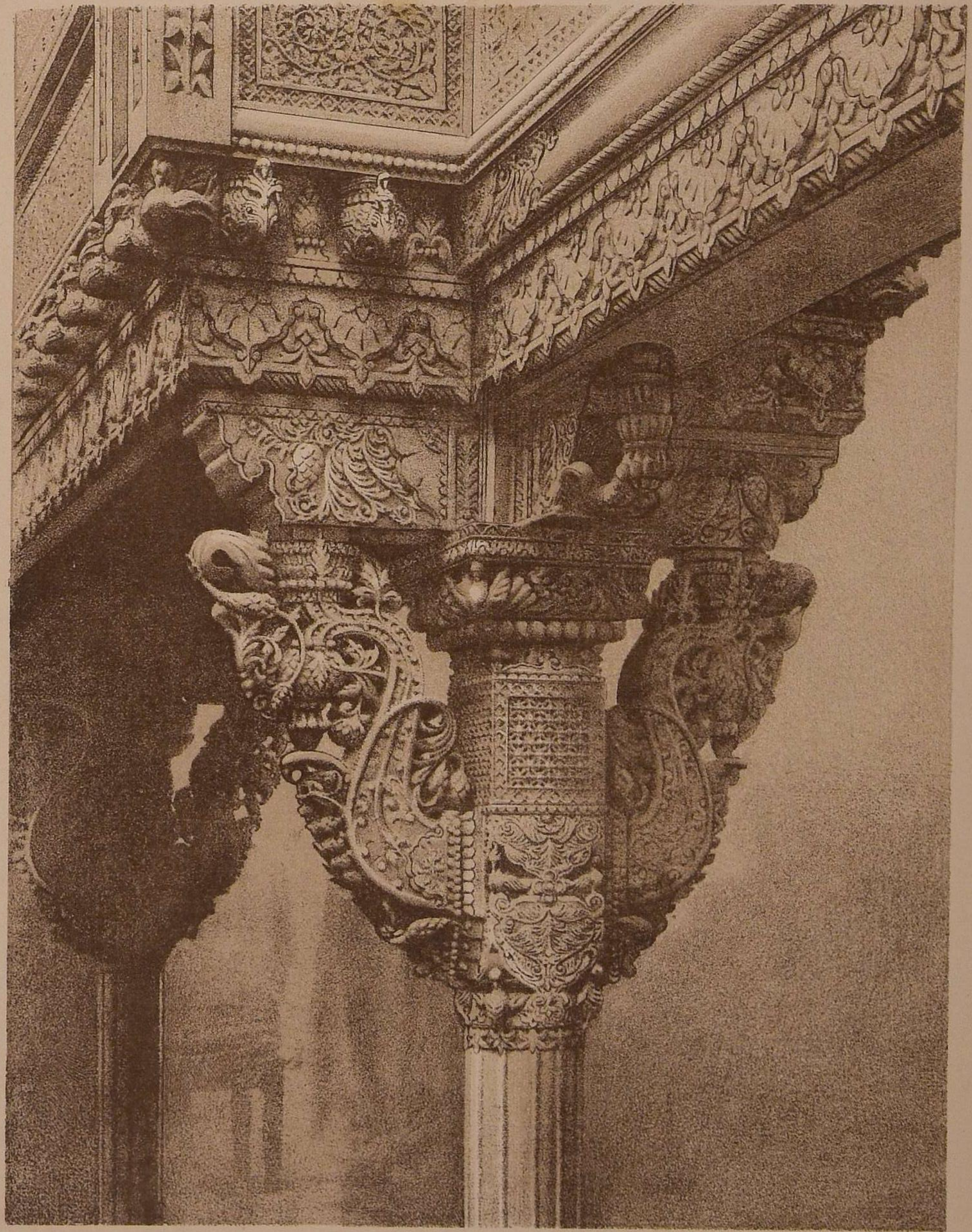

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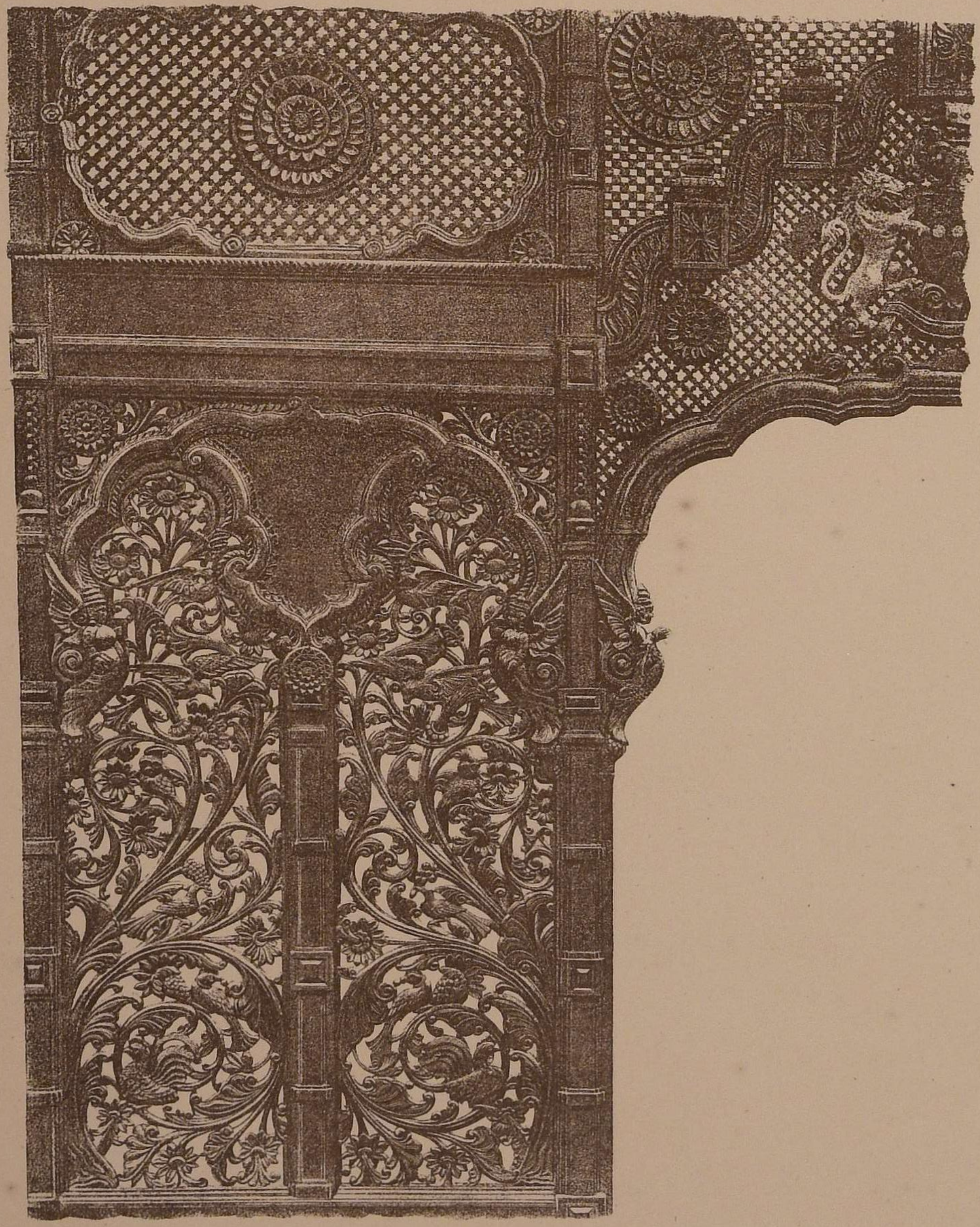

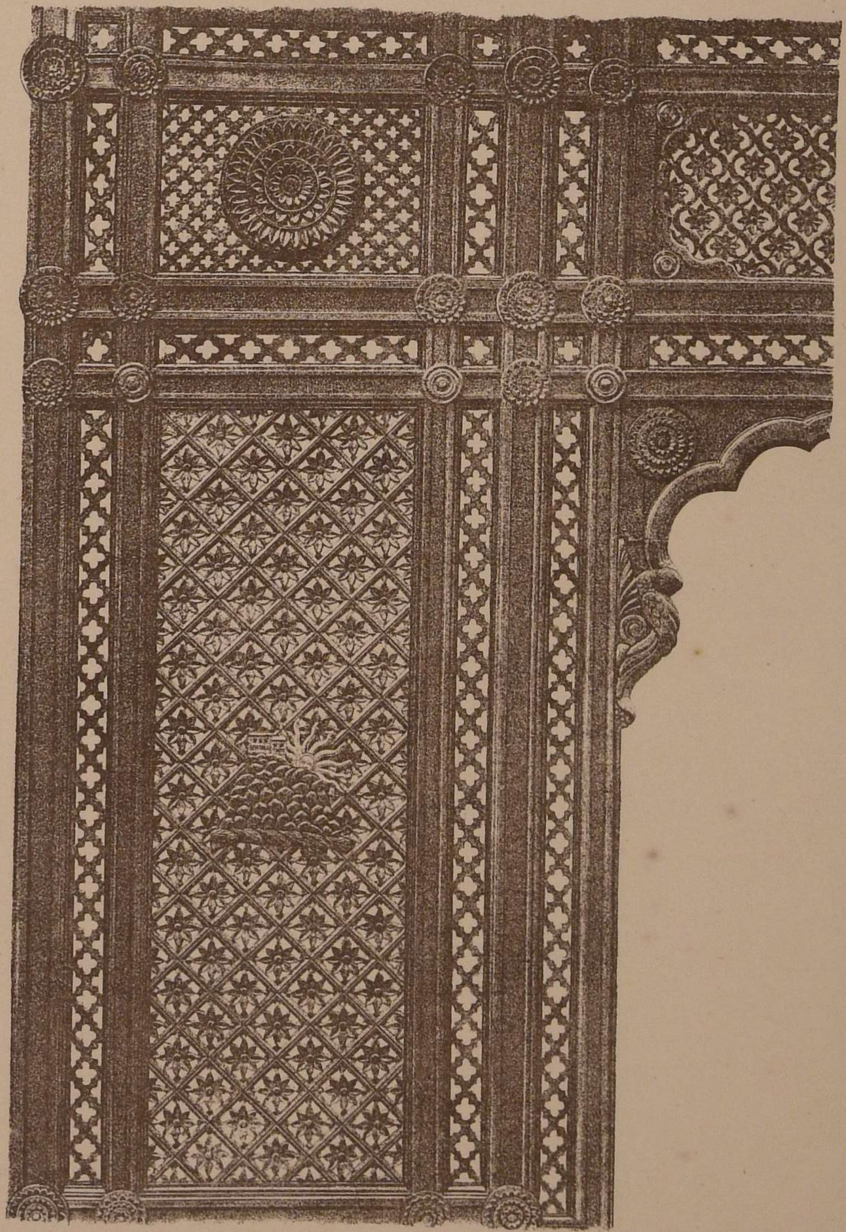

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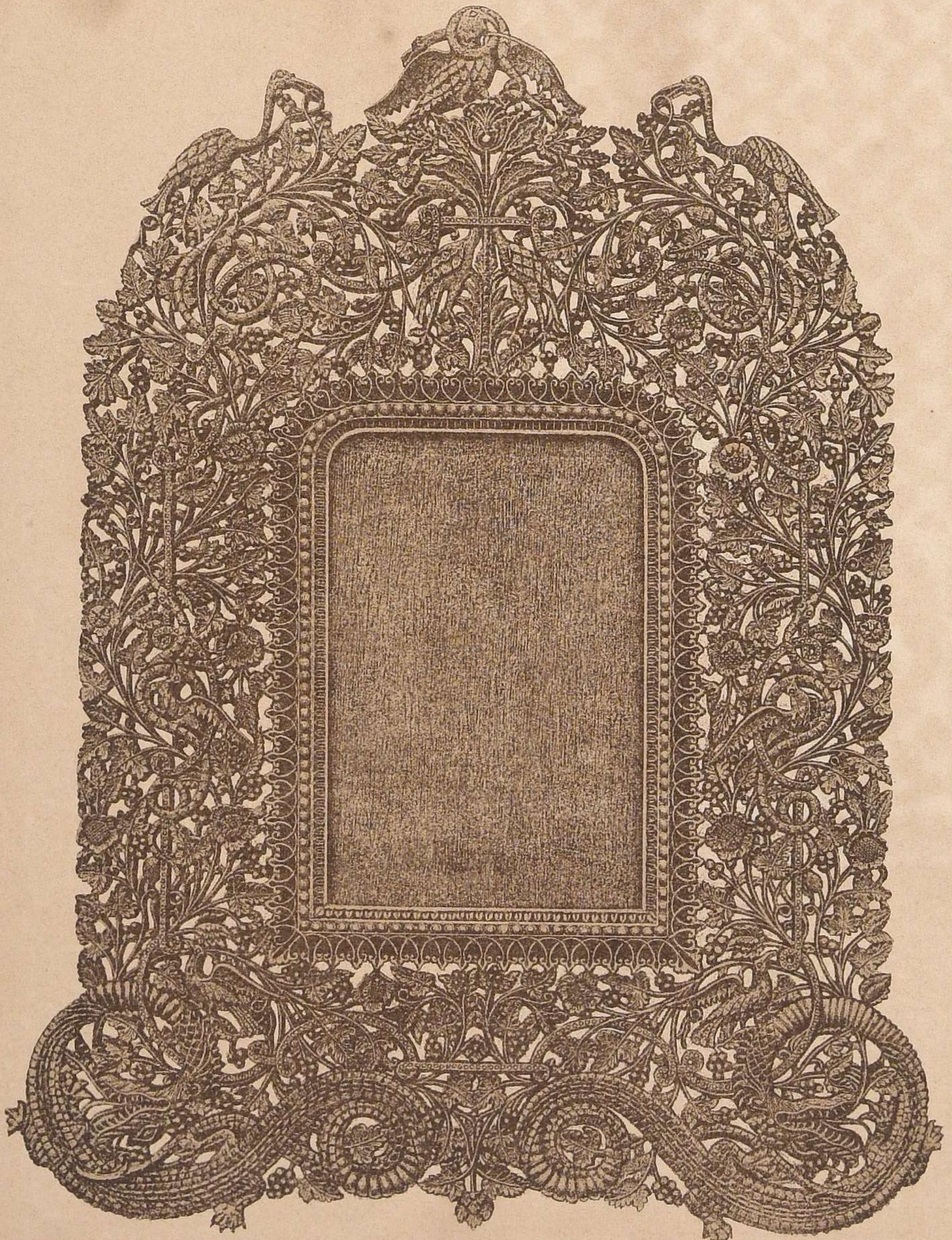

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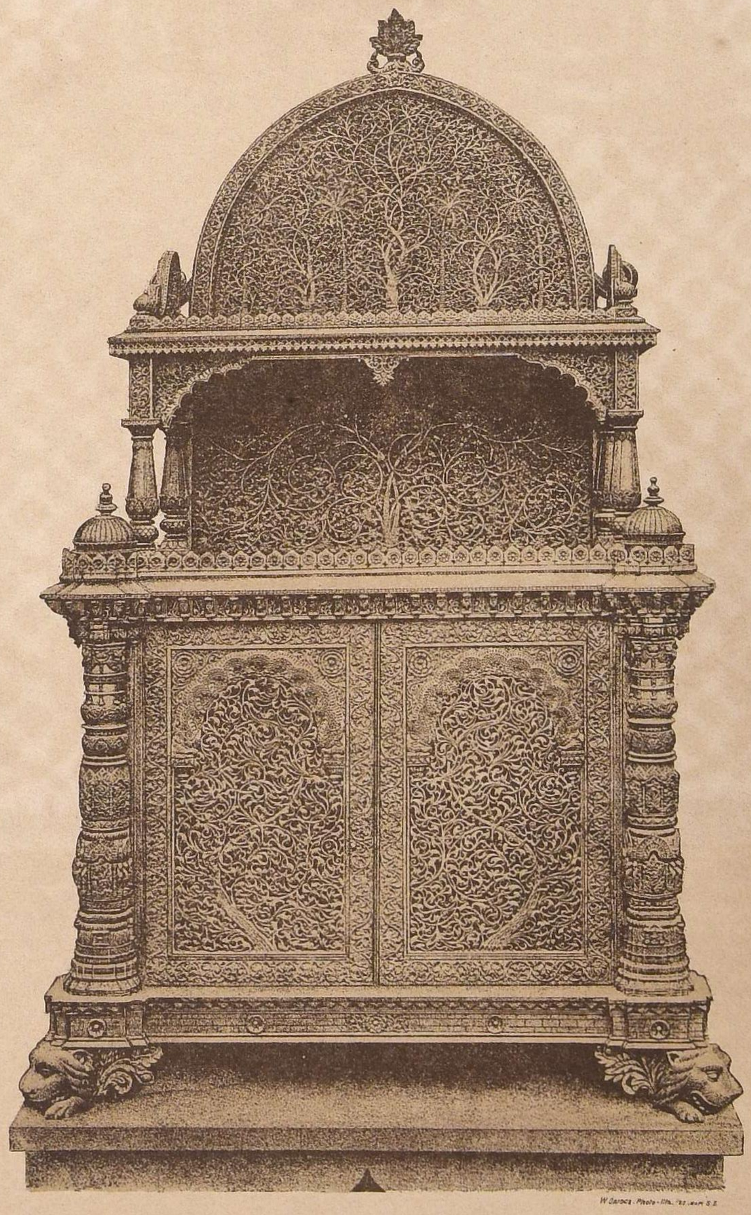

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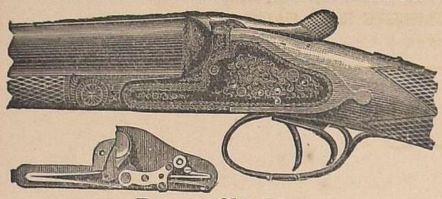

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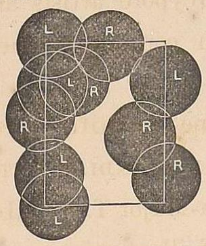

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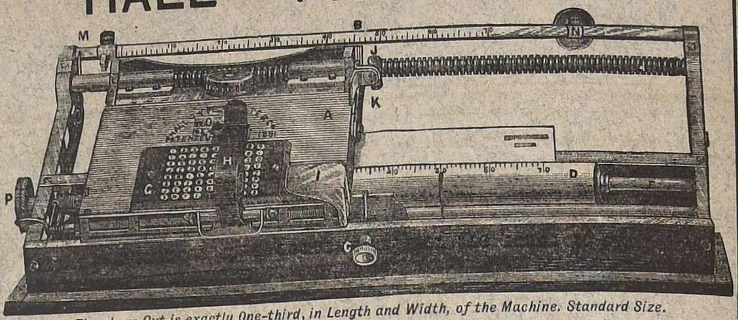

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